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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [NATO](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SR](#)
SUBJECT: AHTISAARI UPDATES THE NAC ON KOSOVO STATUS TALKS;
CALLS ON NATO TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR POST-STATUS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 18, UN Special Envoy for Kosovo, (UNSEK) Martti Ahtisaari updated the NAC on the Kosovo status process under an expanded session with non-NATO KFOR contributing countries. Ahtisaari stated that the talks are reaching a point where he will have to make a comprehensive settlement proposal. While a short delay may be unavoidable, he hopes to present his proposal to the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) by the end of 2006, in keeping with the original timeline. Ahtisaari explained the need for the creation of a post-status Kosovo Security Force (KSF) and called on NATO to fulfill the lead role in the support and development of the new force. Ahtisaari stressed the importance of unity within the international community going forward and an associated public diplomacy campaign. Ambassador Nuland welcomed Ahtisaari's statement on a new KSF and urged the international community to expend every effort toward status resolution in 2006. END SUMMARY.

STATUS TALKS UPDATE

¶2. (SBU) Ahtisaari addressed the expanded NAC and outlined progress in the talks since he last spoke before the NAC in May. He thanked the Alliance for its decision to have a "forceful and visible" presence north of the Ibar which has helped to enhance the security situation in northern Kosovo. He stated that although some progress was made on technical talks, particularly on cultural issues and protection of cultural and religious sites, Belgrade and Pristina remain far apart on key decentralization issues and community rights. Although Ahtisaari intends to continue the negotiations, it is his assessment that a compromise solution is unattainable by the end of 2006 and that the only option left is to present a comprehensive proposal to the UNSC. While acknowledging the possibility of a slight delay in the process due to the prospect of upcoming Serbian elections, Ahtisaari made clear that he is planning to present a proposal to the UNSC by the end of the year. He underscored the importance of avoiding a prolonged delay as Kosovo needed resolution in order to apply for economic assistance and membership in international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

SECURITY POST-STATUS

¶3. (C) Ahtisaari told the NAC that the international community will have to give Kosovo authorities ownership of their security as their institutions develop the proper competencies. In the absence of a post-status security force, NATO would have an open-ended security mandate as a de-militarized Kosovo risked regional instability, with security falling into the hands of private militias and/or organized criminal elements. Ahtisaari expressed his desire to see a completely new, multi-ethnic security force for Kosovo of 2,500 personnel with limits on capabilities and

armaments able to contribute to regional security. Ahtisaari delivered the message that the NAC quickly needs to begin planning for the development and the training of the new force and its associated civilian structures given NATO,s extensive expertise. He added that the Alliance and the EU should continue to have broad and separate mandates, but should increase their ongoing consultations and coordinate their actions. Italy,s Perm Rep questioned the need for a robust Kosovo security force. He suggested that temporary demilitarization would be a good interim solution. Ahtisaari responded that 2,500 lightly-armed troops would not be a threat to the Serbian military.

KFOR

¶4. (SBU) Ahtisaari praised the importance of KFOR in maintaining regional security and NATO,s commitment to stability during the settlement talks. He added that KFOR is respected in Kosovo and its presence will be crucial during the post-settlement period. He called for no changes in KFOR,s structure or mission for at least six months after status. Looking longer term, he thought it necessary that transatlantic partners, through NATO, continue to remain engaged in the Balkans.

UNITY IS KEY GOING FORWARD

¶5. (SBU) Ahtisaari stressed the importance of unity within the international community and Contact Group member states as he prepares to present his proposals to the UNSC. He underscored the importance of a public diplomacy campaign by the international community to deliver a credible, unambiguous message on what post-settlement will mean for the

Kosovo people. He added the importance of continuing to maintain engagement with Serbia during the post-settlement phase. Responding to several inquiries from PermReps on Russia, he stressed that unity among the other CG member states and in the international community would lessen Russia,s ability to negatively influence events.

PERMREPS SUPPORT AHTISAARI

¶6. (SBU) PermReps expressed support for Ahtisaari,s efforts and noted his call for NATO to step up planning for post-status Kosovo, including increased NATO-EU consultations. Some, including Norway and Hungary, stressed the need for positive engagement with Serbia. Ambassador Nuland urged that the international community make every effort to resolve the status issue in 2006, or very soon thereafter. She said that Kosovo would need a small security force - and there was no better training force than NATO and its partners. She also acknowledged that more extensive work with the EU was important; continuity between the KSF and the police would help Kosovo become self-sustaining. She noted the need to remain vigilant during the upcoming Serb referendum while acknowledging Ahtisaari,s call for KFOR troop levels to remain unchanged for six months post-status. She observed that as the KSF became stronger, however, we would be able to turn over more internal security functions to the Kosovo authorities.

QUINT MEETING WITH AHTISAARI

¶7. (SBU) Ambassador Nuland hosted a meeting for Quint PermReps with Ahtisaari prior to the NAC. All of the Quint PermReps expressed support for Ahtisaari,s efforts and welcomed his call for unity, particularly in dealing with Russia. They highlighted the necessity of avoiding any prolonged delays and the need for NATO and the EU to work closer together on Kosovo. While four of the PermReps took note of Ahtisaari,s call for a KSF, Italy expressed concerns about the need for such a force (repeated in the NAC).

NULAND